

these cards and gives the insurance industry a \$46 billion subsidiary. And do my colleagues know what? While the drug benefit program does not go into effect until 2006, the insurance industry, the HMOs, already got their payment on March 1, their first payment.

Mr. Speaker, we could have done this right and done a regular prescription drug program through Medicare with a good discount. Instead, the President and the Republican leadership have again done the bidding of the drug industry, again have done the bidding of the insurance industry, again have done the bidding of these companies that make these discount cards.

It is outrageous, Mr. Speaker, that instead of doing Medicare right and preserving the Medicare that we know and that this country likes and that seniors have benefited from, we have privatized this system. We have confused seniors, and we have let the drug industry and the insurance industry write this legislation, benefit from that legislation, and cash in on this legislation.

WE MUST SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, first of all, in response, I found a different case from my constituents. The first woman who signed up for one of the drug cards, Mr. Speaker, was 85. She had a monthly cost of \$409, and after the card was given and she was able to navigate her way through it, her cost was \$13.61. Mr. Speaker, that hardly sounds like the drug industry is going to get a payoff.

Mr. Speaker, I, like many, am profoundly disappointed in the photos and the actions of a handful of our soldiers, but I do not for one moment mistake the actions of a few to be representative of the many.

On the floor of this House, Mr. Speaker, I have heard my colleagues from the other side of the aisle say that the war being fought in Iraq cannot be won and is, in fact, "unwinnable." And yet with straight faces these same colleagues say that they support our troops.

They have short memories, Mr. Speaker. They say they support our troops, and yet some of them earnestly voted against providing our troops with the very resources they need in the field, fighting not only for our liberty but for the freedoms of others.

Mr. Speaker, the words and actions of these individuals do not indicate support for our troops, and I find it profoundly disappointing when some show such blatant disregard, dishonor, and disrespect for our troops. Some of my colleagues have made such comments without concern for the impact that it has on the morale of our troops who are currently fighting in Iraq as well as those who are poised to go to Iraq.

Is this Election Year rhetoric and the partisan banter part of the Democrats' winnable strategy in Iraq? The bottom line is that some Members of the other party have become representative for retreat and appeasement. Mr. Speaker, appeasement and retreat has not worked in the past and will not work in the future with the terrorists. Mr. Speaker, we must win this war on terror. The stakes are too great for the future of humanity.

I went to Iraq late last year and personally visited with our soldiers. The young men in this picture and the young women that I met, those are the soldiers in Iraq who are an all-volunteer force who are fighting so that our children and grandchildren do not have to live in a world where there is daily fear of terrorism. These men and women deserve the thanks of a grateful Nation and a grateful world. They deserve to have our unwavering support for their unwavering belief in liberty and their understanding of freedom.

Since the American people will not hear these stories on the evening news, Mr. Speaker, I am here tonight to share true stories of astonishing bravery, courage, compassion, valor, and steel nerve. Mr. Speaker, I am talking about our soldiers and what they have done for America, Iraq, Afghanistan, and the entire world.

The soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division have been working to make Iraq secure but also have been putting time and effort into helping towns and villages with their "Operation Helping Hands" program. With "Operation Helping Hands," our soldiers donate their own money to help provide families with food and health care necessities. Brigade Commander Colonel Ben Hodges came up with the idea of helping the poor families in the area. They have collected several thousand dollars, which goes a long way toward helping many Iraqi families.

Mr. Speaker, our troops are compassionate. They are helping Iraqi families in a way that they have never been helped before. Soldiers are often out in Iraq communities to provide medical care and humanitarian assistance. A small, impoverished village about 10 miles from Baghdad was recently paid a visit by personnel from the Medical Civic Action Program. This program sends doctors and medics out to provide free medical care on a regular basis. Because of conditions under Saddam Hussein, soldiers are treating diseases we rarely see here at home such as tuberculosis, hepatitis, and polio.

Mr. Speaker, we should also be proud of our troops for fighting for women's rights. For the first time in history, women in Mosul, Iraq were able to join the rest of the world in celebrating International Women's Day. The day recognizes coordinated efforts of women everywhere for equal rights and political and economic equality.

The People's Assembly Building was rededicated as the Center for Iraqi Women. The center will serve as a

meeting place for all women of Iraq where they can share ideas, offer training, coordinate communications, and build a safer homeland.

And in Mosul, Iraqi police say they are grateful to the soldiers from the U.S. Army's 503rd Military Police Battalion for their assistance in rebuilding police stations. Coalition forces helped to renovate several police stations and enabled the Iraqi police officers to protect their fellow citizens. There are more than 1,600 policemen who have trained from scratch in an 8-week training program.

Mr. Speaker, these are the stories of our young men and women in Iraq. These are the stories of the people who are fighting for freedom and fighting to rebuild a country. Mr. Speaker, the war on terror must be won.

The new Iraqi Army is growing. In early March, more than 1,000 recruits of the 4th Battalion graduated from the nine-week basic training program.

These are our soldiers' stories. There are hundreds, perhaps thousands more. I am proud of our soldiers and want to say "thank you." These are not the stories that you will hear on the news, or in the newspapers—nor will you hear them during election year rhetoric.

A U.S. soldier evacuated an Iraqi woman, Farha Abed Saad for medical treatment after she had been harmed by the thugs who wish to rob Iraqis of their right to freedom. "Thank God, you have come here to Iraq and make us free," said Ms. Saad, kissing a soldier's hands. "When I see you, I see my own sons! Thank you, thank you."

It is a sad day, Mr. Speaker, when some in this city who routinely ignore the great accomplishments of our soldiers only to politicize the war at their expense.

We will win this war on terror, Mr. Speaker, there is no other option. This IS a winnable war—and we must stand behind our policy and our troops with a firm resolve.

A world controlled by terrorists is not acceptable. If the United States of America cannot defeat terrorism, who in the world can? We will continue to fight against Al-Qaeda and Al-Qaeda affiliated groups—like the one who viciously beheaded 26-year-old Nick Berg. Nick Berg was a civilian who voluntarily went to Iraq to help rebuild Iraqi communication antennas. And my prayers are with his family.

After 9-11, Mr. Speaker, America was called to a new destiny. Our destiny is to defeat terrorism and tyranny. Amid the towers of American tragedy, Mr. Speaker, emerged our soldiers as towers of American strength.

And they shall have my eternal gratitude.

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REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4275, PERMANENT EXTENSION OF 10-PERCENT INDIVIDUAL INCOME TAX RATE BRACKET

Mr. SESSIONS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 108-483) on the resolution (H. Res. 637) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4275) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, to permanently extend the 10-percent individual